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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of Literacy Collaborative, a comprehensive, schoolwide program designed to provide long-term support to schools working toward successful literacy achievement for every child by the end of 2nd grade. There are currently (year 2000) 190 literacy coordinators or trainers serving 372 schools in 25 states. The instructional framework centers on a two-hour literacy lesson that integrates both reading and writing activities. Flexible grouping is used, depending on the instructional purpose and selected activity. Students needing more help receive one-to-one intervention through Reading Recovery tutoring. An assessment and research component includes reflective practice by teachers, formal and informal systematic assessment, and data collection to analyze changes in students' literacy learning over time. Sections of the paper discuss background, philosophy and goals, program components, evidence of effectiveness, professional development and support, implementation, costs, considerations, contact information, and policy issues and questions. (SR)

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Literacy Collaborative

**Background - Philosophy and Goals - Program Components - Evidence of Effectiveness
Professional Development and Support - Implementation - Costs - Considerations
Policy Issues and Questions - Resources**

Topic or Category: Reading
Grade Level: K-3 (primary)
Target Population: All students

OVERVIEW

Background and Scope:

The Literacy Collaborative combines a primary literacy program for all students and a long-term professional development initiative with an assessment component to provide a comprehensive, schoolwide approach to literacy instruction. Formerly known as the Early Literacy Learning Initiative, it began in 1986 when a group of Reading Recovery teachers from the Columbus Public Schools and staff from the Ohio State University formed a study group to look for more effective ways to teach children.

Schools that participate in the Literacy Collaborative must make a five-year commitment, including support for the training and work of the onsite literacy collaborator. There are currently 390 literacy coordinators or trainers, serving 372 schools in 150 districts in 25 states. Most of the schools using the Literacy Collaborative framework are concentrated in Alabama, California, Massachusetts and Ohio.

In addition to the Ohio State University location, literacy coordinator training is offered at Georgia State University (Atlanta), Lesley College (Cambridge, Massachusetts) and Texas Tech University (Lubbock).

Philosophy and Goals:

The goal of the Literacy Collaborative is to raise the base of instruction for all students. The process for achieving the goal is three-fold:
First, the program provides a dynamic framework involving connections of reading and writing within a two-hour literacy lesson.
Second, the program builds local capacity by training a literacy coordinator who manages and assists with professional development, and helps to expand and strengthen the program.
Third, the program integrates Reading Recovery for at-risk 1st graders needing the safety net of additional literacy mediation.

Program Components:

The comprehensive approach of Literacy Collaborative is designed to provide long-term support to schools working toward successful literacy achievement for every child by the end of 2nd grade.

The instructional framework uses an integrated approach to teaching language arts. Lessons consist of various activities that provide substantial amounts of reading and writing. These opportunities for developing literacy form a continuum ranging from more or less teacher support, depending upon student abilities and needs.

The developers provide a matrix showing each element in a lesson, the values underlying the element and the supporting research references.

Each two-hour literacy lesson integrates both reading and writing activities:
Reading includes reading aloud to children, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading.
Writing includes language experience and shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and writers' workshop and independent writing.

Elements of each reading and writing lesson are:
Connected through special attention to letters, words and how they work, providing opportunities for children to notice and use letters and words.
Integrated to achieve coherence through themes and extensions of the content curriculum, thus linking art, drama, music, experiments and mathematics activities.
Assessed through ongoing documentation of progress, including teacher observational data collected systematically over time and administration of formal assessments.
Linked to families through activities called "home and community involvement" in which parents participate.

Flexible grouping, both heterogeneous and homogeneous, is used, depending upon the instructional purpose and selected activity. When appropriate, for example, the teacher works with the entire class during reading aloud time or writing workshop. At other times, the teacher meets with small groups or individual.

Students needing more help receive one-to-one intervention through Reading Recovery tutoring.

The Literacy Collaborative includes an assessment and research component that all participating schools use. The component incorporates the following three areas:
Reflective practice by teachers in which they focus on the effectiveness of their teaching through discussions, videotaping analysis and systematic observation of students' progress.
Systematic assessment, both formal and informal, to monitor student progress.
Research and development design incorporating a five-year data collection process that provides evidence to analyze changes in students' literacy learning and school change over time.

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Preliminary results from schools in which the Literacy Collaborative training model has been implemented fully for four or more years reveal that the majority (80%) of schools demonstrated a consistent pattern of improved standardized test results in reading from fall 1995 to fall 1997. The average NCE (see* below) gain on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test in Reading Comprehension over the three years was 5.60 NCEs and 5.31 NCEs in Total Reading. See table below for Fall 1995 - Fall 1997 data.

Schools selected for analysis in this study had to meet the following criteria: (1) the Literacy Collaborative model had been fully implemented at the site for at least four years, making it possible to examine results over time, and (2) the literacy coordinator had been at the school since the beginning of his/her training. Five schools met the criteria; schools selected for study, however, varied considerably in the percent of K-2 teachers who had completed the initial training. Student mobility and attendance rates were influencing factors in the students' achievement.

Standardized Test Results on Gates-MacGinitie Reading Subtest for 2nd-Grade Cohorts:
[* Note: An NCE, Normal Curve Equivalent, is generally considered to provide the truest indication of student growth in achievement because it provides comparative information in equal units of measurement, based on percentiles that compare the student's performance in relation to the general population. An NCE of 50 represents where a student should be for his/her grade level.] Please see Fall 1998 Results listed below the table.

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING TABLE WAS REVISED ON OCTOBER 1ST TO ACCURATELY REFLECT THE FALL 1995 - 1997 NCE RESULTS.

Fall 1995 - Fall 1997 Standardized Test Results on Gates-MacGinitie Reading Subtest for

2nd-Grade Cohorts

School	**Fall 1995** Number of Students	Reading Comp (NCE)	Total Reading (NCE)	**Fall 1996** Number of Students	Reading Comp (NCE)	Total Reading (NCE)	**Fall 1997** Number of Students	Reading Comp (NCE)	Total Reading (NCE)
School A	41	29.6	29.2	37	35.9	35.1	45	44.7	41.5
School B	40	24.7	24.6	31	31.3	27.9	34	35.8	33.1
School C	50	18.6	17.2	36	24.9	23.2	43	30.0	27.9
School D	NA	NA	NA	27	18.4	15.8	33	24.5	19.9
School E	NA	NA	NA	40	34.3	32.3	42	43.3	39.8

All schools, except School E, are urban schools, with their Free and Reduced Priced Lunch population ranging from 60% to 99%. School A is an urban school with 22% of the school population being special education students. School C experienced a major change in the configuration of the school population at the beginning of the 1996-97 school year due to a change in the district's busing policy; thus, many of the students assessed in 2nd grade had not participated in the Literacy Collaborative program.

Of the five schools in this report, two (Schools A and B) collected additional fall-spring data to measure student achievement of all 1st- grade students during the 1996-97 school year. Both schools administered the Text Reading Level (TRL) and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (HRSIW) assessments. In fall 1996, most of the 1st-grade students in School B read at a level expected for 1st grade, while in spring 1997, most of these children were reading at a higher level than expected. Students at School B achieved growth, but at a less dramatic rate. Overall distribution of stanines on both the TRL and HRSIW for 1st graders at both schools revealed a positive shift in on reading and writing measures.

Fall 1998 Results: Standardized Test Results on Gates-MacGinitie Reading Subtest for 2nd-Grade Cohorts

School	Number of Students	Reading Comprehension (NCE)	Total Reading (NCE)
School A	40	45.6	44.4
School B	27	44.8	45.0
School C	42	31.7	30.0
School D	37	39.1	40.4
School E	40	46.2	43.5

Analysis of Students Scoring in the Lowest Quartile, 1995-1998

An examination of quartile data for the same cohorts reveals a consistent pattern of fewer students scoring in the lowest quartile. At School A, for example, 68.3% of 2nd graders scored in the lowest quartile on reading comprehension during Year One. The percent of students scoring in the lowest quartile decreased to 22.5% by fall 1998, however. Similar shifts occurred in School B (Year One - 57.5%, decreased to 29.6%), School C (Year One - 82%, decreased to 50%), School D (Year One - 85.2%, decreased to 35.1), and School E (Year One - 47.5%, decreased to 17.5%). These results indicate a substantial shift as the number of students decreased in the lowest quartile and increased in higher quartiles. A similar pattern was found for total reading scores.

Professional Development and Support:

Implementation of Literacy Collaborative requires school leaders to commit to support the necessary training for all participants. Teachers participate in a long-term professional development program that integrates theory and practice. This training is conducted onsite by the literacy coordinator who receives extensive training through a year-long course conducted at one of the four university sites.

Schools also must commit to continuous assessment and research. Teachers are trained to become reflective practitioners and to use both formal and informal measures to monitor student progress and teacher effectiveness. A five-year data collection program analyzes changes in students' literacy learning and evaluates school change over time.

Included in the annual fee to maintain status as a Literacy Collaborative site is an annual directory, semi-annual newsletter, copies of brochures and other miscellaneous items.

Implementation:

The developers provide a phased implementation timeline, beginning with an awareness and planning stage and ending with an independent implementation stage.

The most critical component of implementation is the application for literacy coordinator training in April. The 17-page application form requires assurances of a five-year commitment, continuous training of the coordinator and staff, and payment of data collection and analysis fees. The fees are based upon student enrollment in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades.

Schools must invest in two kinds of book collections that serve as springboards for literacy activities. The developers provide an extensive reading list that includes a variety of topics and themes.

Evaluation is an essential feature of the Literacy Collaborative. Each year, data are collected on the literacy achievement of kindergarten, 1st- and 2nd-grade children, serving several purposes:
To establish baseline and measure progress toward goals
To design/revise the school literacy curriculum
To inform daily instruction of individual students
To inform administrators and the public.

Schools implementing Literacy Collaborative must participate in an annual fall assessment of student achievement using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (Dictation Task), Benchmark Test Reading Assessment and Fluency. Cost for the assessments are paid by individual schools.

Costs:

The instructional fee for enrollment in the Literacy Coordinator Training Class is $11,000 for Ohio residents and $12,000 for non-Ohio residents. It covers training during six intensive weeks at a university site and two site visits during the training year. Participants earn three graduate nondegree credits after training is completed successfully.

Additional costs include a charge of $3,000 for professional books and other supplies and materials.

There is an annual $200 fee to maintain status as a Literacy Collaborative site, which is waived during the initial training year. This fee covers the cost of an annual directory, semi-annual newsletter, copies of brochures and other miscellaneous items.

After the initial year of training, annual site visits by Ohio State University personnel are made to participating schools. Each visit costs $500 per day plus all travel expenses.

Training Modules for the literacy coordinators to use at school sites cost approximately $125 each. The

first set of modules is included in the instructional fee, and the number of additional models used by a school may vary.

Following the second year of implementation, literacy coordinators are required to participate in a three-day summer institute at Ohio State University. A school needs to budget expenses for lodging, transportation and meals for each summer institute.

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test or *Aprenda* (for Spanish-speaking students) is administered each fall to all 2nd-grade students in Literacy Collaborative schools. The English testing packets cost $3 per student, and the Spanish version approximately $8 per student (which includes company scoring). In addition to this annual testing, each school also must participate in program data collection and analysis. That cost is based upon the student enrollment in K-2, with costs ranging from $100 for schools with fewer than 250 students to $400 for schools with more 750 students.

The developers estimate the annual expense for Year One to be $21,086; this cost may be greater depending upon how far the elementary school is from a university training site. Estimated cost for Year Two is $4,150. The cost decreases to approximately $1,850 by Year Five.

Considerations:

Schools considering the Literacy Collaborative must make a long-term commitment to create a school-based planning team to serve as the leadership group that will communicate, support and monitor implementation over several years. The site also must commit to continuing professional development and ongoing assessment. The initial year of implementation is expensive due to the intensive training required for new literacy coordinators.

Because of the extensive training required for the literacy coordinator position, careful consideration should be made regarding commitment of the person selected to assume this responsibility. The role requires daily classroom teaching (30% to 50% time) and serving as the onsite professional development coordinator and trainer.

Consideration also needs to be made regarding the distance of the elementary school from one of the university training sites in California, Georgia, Massachusetts and Ohio. Annual site visits are required, and the school assumes not only the site visit fee but also all travel expenses.

Policy Issues and Questions:
How can states help districts and schools choose the most appropriate programs to improve students' skills and performance? What information and assistance would be useful?
Should states promote particular programs for districts and schools to use?
How can policymakers check and validate a program's track record before they encourage districts to implement the program?
What criteria should states and districts use to invest in various programs initially and for the long term?
How should policymakers weigh benefits of a program versus its costs and required resources? Can a balance be struck between effectiveness and efficiency?
How can a state encourage public participation/community interaction in schools and individual programs?
What state policies can help to improve teacher training and professional development so teachers are better equipped to help students learn more effectively?

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Resources:

Clay, Marie (1991). *Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control.* Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann Education.

Clay, Marie. (1993). *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement.* Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann Education.

Please note that information issued by ECS strives to combine the best of the most recent and most valuable research available. Should you have questions on any aspect of information provided by ECS, please contact our Information Clearinghouse at 303-299-3675.
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